'Mr. America' Tells Of Trip With McGovern

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Richard Johnson's Trip With McGovern

'Average American' Eyes Campaign

by RICHARD JOHNSON
First of Three Parts

(Early this year, Richard Johnson of Rolling Meadows was selected by the National Public Affairs Center for Television to represent the average American. The Johnson family became the subject of a television documentary dealing with the views of the middle class toward candidates in the upcoming presidential election. And in September, Johnson toured the country on a campaign trip with Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern. He recorded his impressions during the week-long tour, and today the Herald begins the first installment of memoirs written by Johnson shortly after he arrived home.)

September 5, 1972 began a week in my life that I will never forget. At 1 p.m. I boarded a DC 10 at O'Hare Field and was on my way to Los Angeles to join Senator McGovern and his campaign party for approximately one week.

As the plane rolls down the runway I begin to wonder — what is going to happen? What, with all the meeting of the press, talking with Senator McGovern, skipping throughout the country — what would all this bring — and what kind of impression will it leave me as a so called average voter from Rolling Meadows.

I am to be a subject of an up-coming TV show which gives an average middle income American an opportunity to describe his views of what he sees and hears on a Presidential Campaign on a tour throughout the midwestern states and the northern part of this country.

The plane is gaining speed now and I suddenly realize that the airplane is now airborne — this is a first for me having never been in a plane before save a Piper Cub 20 years ago. My stomach is a bit tense, as would be expected — and for those of you who have ever been on the Bobs at Riverview in the old days of Chicago, you know exactly how I felt if you were climbing the first hill.

The music on the loudspeaker plays "Beautiful Ohio" as we proceed west en route to Los Angeles, where I will meet the team that will produce this show. I was very excited just thinking of the tremendous opportunity that lies just ahead. The captain announces that we are flying at 35,000 feet and cruising at approximately 600 m.p.h. and as I look below I get my first glimpse of the Grand Canyon — beautiful!

We are allowed, of course, to roam through the aircraft and I have an opportunity to talk to some of the passengers telling them that very shortly, upon my arrival in Los Angeles, a team of camera men, sound men, news correspondents, and other people of the N-Pact group will be awaiting my arrival. We land on schedule and again I wonder — just what is going to happen when I get off the airplane.

AS I WALK through the ramp leading from the plane, being pushed along with the crowd, I suddenly make a left and in the arrival room I see many people among them some cameras and lighting equipment. I hear the N-Pact news correspondent, Robin, announce to the crew that "there he is" — and immediately all lights turned on and cameras are grinding. Robin greets me with the usual "How was the trip west" and "Did you enjoy it" — small talk. And as we move forward I can feel everyone is wondering who I am?

One elderly lady just couldn't stand it any longer and tapped the shoulder of our producer Bob, and asked, "Who is that man?" Bob, looking as if he could hardly believe the question replied, "Why that's Richard Johnson" — and the woman, nodding knowingly said, "oooooh." I often wondered how she explained who Richard Johnson was to her family that night.

After picking up my luggage we proceeded to two rented cars where Robin interviewed me regarding how I felt about the election up to this point and also a few impressions that I had as to what was to happen during the week. This interview takes place in the car as we go to our hotel.

That evening, Senator McGovern was to give a short speech at the hotel, Hilton, however Bob decided it unwise for me to attend as he wanted me to be fresh in the morning to attend a speech by the senator as he addressed a group of rabbis.

Since there was nothing scheduled for the remainder of the evening, Bob and I had dinner on the top floor of the Occidental Hotel overlooking the expansive city of Los Angeles. We returned at about 11 p.m. and went to bed to be ready for the busy days ahead.

Day 2

At 7 a.m. I was awakened by the hotel phone to let me know that I must get going in order to meet the press and obtain all my credentials and passes. Senator McGovern was to give a speech to a group of rabbis and this would be my first exposure to an actual presidential campaign speech. The room was packed with the rabbis, their wives and families and the press. As soon as the doors were closed, Senator McGovern entered. I listened attentively as he discussed briefly the problems of the Olympics as this was the day after several Israelis were killed by Arab fanatics. Senator McGovern placed the blame solely on the two countries of Egypt and Lebanon.

WHAT IMPRESSED me most at this meeting was how disorganized it was. It seemed that they invited more people than they could accommodate at the breakfast. However as I later describe this continual action as "disorganized organization" things seem to be accomplished. The senator finished in about half-an hour and then an answer and question period took place. After this I was interviewed by the N-Pact team relaing to them my observations and impressions of the speech. I was a bit upset at the loudness of press row when Senator McGovern was speaking, however, I found out later that this was not unusual. It seemed to me that a little more courtesy could be given the senator as he was speaking to the public .

Shortly thereafter, we all boarded chartered buses to take us down to the Los Angeles Convention Center to hear the senator speak to IAM workers. I was surprised when they seated me right below the podium where the senator was speaking and smiled at the fact that just prior to the Senator speaking the convention had listened to the opening speech by Ronald Reagan of California. After McGovern's speech a roll call was taken by the convention to see if they could get a majority to endorse Senator McGovern for President. However up to the time we had left, they were still debating the issue and it seemed that the convention was split down the middle. After we left the convention hall, Robin again interviewed me on my reaction to what was going on. At this point I was utterly confused. First hearing one side of the coin and then the other, and to climax everything people at the convention were undecided on which way to turn. After some coffee and sandwiches we returned by bus to the airport to take off to our next city that afternoon — San Diego, Calif.

At the San Diego Airport we were to visit a Teladyne Plant of aerospace workers where Senator McGovern was just to shake hands and have a general talk with the workers. It was here where I got close enough to the Senator to shake his hand for the 1st time. This was a thrill for me. But a very unusual thing happened just then. As I made an attempt to get around to the other side of McGovern, to get closer to him, one of the Secret Service men grabbed my arm and held me back. I didn't understand what the problem was and the same thing happened again later. Finally the producer of the show, Bob, told me that the Secret Service did not like anybody to move fast around the senator, So, from that point on, I did not move in a hurried fashion whatsoever.

After our San Diego stop we boarded the charter United 727 and settled back to enjoy our usual drink to relax a bit as we headed for Dallas, Tex. The trip should take about 1½ hours and was able to take some beautiful pictures of the mountains below. Ran into a little rain, but once above the clouds the sun is shining brightly and it is a fantastic sight. I have time now to take notes and write in my book and as I am doing this, the cameras are again grinding and it seems kind of a waste to film scenes like this.

ONE OF THE unusual impressions that I had is noticing the vast amount of youth working with Senator McGovern on this campaign tour. I have just had a talk with one of the young ladies in charge of making reservations throughout the cities visited during the tour and also keeping up with the releases and statements regarding speeches of the Senator. I am really impressed with the fact that being so young she had such a responsible job.

The stewardess now comes and asks if we are interested in supper and if we care for another drink. This is the continual pattern of service through the entire trip. (Think I'm betting spoiled.) During dinner, Bob mentions that they are using about 12 to 1 footage on the film which is just about average. He assures me that things are going along fine.

The pilot of the charter asks if anybody would be interested to see the plane fly from the captain's chair. Not wanting to pass up this opportunity, I gingerly went into the cockpit and was shocked to see that the plane truly flies itself. There were four dials that were in an "on" position and all four people that were to be flying the airplane, a pilot, a co-pilot, flight engineer, and I don't know who the other fellow was, were just sitting there talking with each other.

Richard Johnson

It's about 8:15 p.m. now and what a beautiful sight to see the "Big D" at night. After landing on schedule we immediately went to the Fairmont Hotel where Senator McGovern had a speech and rally. There was a Dixieland Band there and approximately 2,000 people — but the speech itself was rather dull. In fact a funny thing happened as I was standing under the podium where McGovern was speaking. The man next to me was reciting word for word the speech with Senator McGovern. After a couple of paragraphs, the man said something different than McGovern and said, 'Oh, the Senator goofed it up again." I asked the man if he was a writer for McGovern since he knew the speech so well, and he replied: "No, he was just a regular press man — after you hear as many speeches as I do, you begin to learn them by heart."

The crowd here seemed quite cool to the senator's speech. As far as I could see, it seemed that again the people listening were split.

As soon as we got to our hotel room we set up the cameras and lights for what we referred to as "the telephone scene." This was the scene where every night at all the hotels where I was staying, I would call my wife, Mary Ann back in Rolling Meadows to let her know what happened to us during the day. This conversation was to be the narration for the TV program. Finally, about midnight, we completed the call and it was quite interesting because Mary Ann didn't know we were also taping her voice too. After saying "goodnight" to everyone, I was told to get up at 7 a.m. for another full day on the campaign trail. (Tomorrow: A day in Texas and then through Illinois.)

Trinidad Steel Band Now At Randhurst

The Trinidad Steel Band will perform on the Randhurst mall today through Sunday.

The band has a wide repertoire ranging from the classics to calypso and pop.

The early days of the steelbands produced no melody. They were used expressly for providing a rhythmic background for festivities of the Trinidad Carnival Season which immediately precedes Lent.

It wasn't until 1940 that the first actual melodic sounds were produced and simple melodies were played. Today the musical standards of the steelband are considered so high that there is very little music that is not possible to attempt.

Show times today and Friday, will be noon to 8 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. Each performance will last 20 minutes.

Political Visit 'Like Ball Game'

by RICHARD JOHNSON
Second of three parts

DAY 3

Thursday, Sept. 7, was a beautiful day as it dawned over Dallas, Texas. The senator was scheduled to visit shoppers at a downtown supermarket at about 10 a.m. We boarded the buses around 9:30 a.m. and went to the supermarket. As we all managed to get through the doors and into the supermarket, it seemed that I was in the middle of a football stadium — what a crowd!

Senator McGovern was shaking hands with everyone, asking them questions concerning different problems they may have such as food pricing or general woes in connection with the economic squeezes of today. People were discussing problems concerning taxes and in response of the dialogue of the senator and the people, I got the impression that he was sincere when he told them he could help them if he were elected in November. He questioned an 86-year-old Negro and asked him if he was still working. The man replied, "I sure am," but added, "everything was out of sight, man, and something will have to give somewhere." McGovern assured that he would do what he could if he was elected to alleviate this man's plight.

After being pushed and shoved around for 45 minutes, we finally made a complete tour of the supermarket. We were not only happy to get outside again, but happy to be still all alive. I sincerely believe that Senator McGovern made a good impression with the majority of the people he talked with and that his visit was quite successful.

Back to the buses for a ride to the airport and on to Houston about 200 miles to the southeast. During the trip I talked with some well known newspaper men who gave me a little insight on what this activity of a campaign tour was all about.

It has just been announced that we are running a little bit late due to the fact that Senator McGovern had a personal call with former President Johnson this morning. I'm sure that this talk helped McGovern as he proceeded on the campaign trail.

UPON ARRIVAL IN Houston it was raining off and on and in as much as we had to wait about 10 minutes at the airport for the arrival of the senator's plane, "Dakota Queen II," we all got quite wet. However this did not dampen the enthusiasm of the people at the airport. When the senator arrived the usual "fence scene" took place and then he gave an introductory talk with some local officials. After this we boarded buses to take us to the NASA Center where we were going to view a sky lab experiment of three astronauts being assimilated in one of the vast warehouses, in preparation for an actual flight next year.

The senator viewed the experiment on closed circuit TV and talked with the astronauts inside the vat. He also talked with some of the workers at the space center. From there we went to a Holiday Inn close by where the senator was to talk to some unemployed engineers regarding what he could do for them if he were elected President. The short speech centered around the fact of conversion from military to civilian jobs and my impression was that not too many of the engineers or other people present could quite accept what he had to offer.

Some of the comments overheard were: "I don't see how he could possibly do this. If there is a reduction of the spending of military funds, how can we expect to have jobs on a civilian basis." There again, I felt there were mixed emotions regarding Senator McGovern's conversations. Now it's back to the buses and back to the airport and on to Peoria, Ill.

There were always two planes traveling together. McGovern's "Dakota Queen II" and a press plane. As we were flying from Houston to Peoria, the two planes jockeyed back and forth very close to one another so that we could take pictures of each other's plane in flight. Of course I don't think this is generally done, but it gave all of us an opportunity to get some excellent pictures.

The flight from Houston to Peoria took a little over an hour and believe it or not — we were put into a holding pattern for 10 minutes before we could land. This is most unusual for a small airport.

While in Peoria, Senator McGovern will visit with some night shift workers who are eating supper. He visited with them asking various questions concerning some of the programs he will stand for in this election year. Our stop in East St. Louis has been scrubbed as we are now behind schedule.

IN THE LUNCHROOM of the Caterpillar Tractor Works, Senator McGovern immediately started to converse with the workers there. Taxes, food prices, and the Vietnam War seemed to be the main issues once again I felt there were mixed emotions concerning the reception of McGovern. One of the questions that stuck in my mind was the Eagleton affair and it appeared that many of the workers present were most upset that the senator had dropped him from his ticket. Our N-Pact team has just been advised that tomorrow we will fly with Senator McGovern in his plane and we're all looking forward to that. Up to now we have always flown in the press plane.

We head now for Rockford, Ill. and land about 8:15 p.m. For the first time in the whole campaign I feel that I am really on a campaign tour during an election year. The crowd that greeted us at the Rockford Airport was quite substantial and with the band playing and the banners waving in the wind it seemed to stir all of us into a feeling of actually being in an election year campaign. Senator McGovern was received very enthusiastically here and I honestly believe that this stop in Rockford was the most successful one in the whole tour.

Back at the hotel in Rockford, I made the usual telephone call to my wife to let her know what an exciting day I had. After completing this, it was about 11 p.m. and I decided to go to bed. But the N-Pact team wanted to get something to eat and so I went too. I was glad I did because while eating with some of the reporters accompanying us on the trip, I heard many stories from the past in which only pressmen who were present at the events, could relate. Finally about 1:15 a.m. we went back to our hotel to be awakened again at sunrise.

DAY 4

As I awoke on Friday morning, Sept. 8, I wondered — what would I say to the senator when I have the opportunity to be on his plane today, if perchance I would meet him. After having the usual breakfast of orange juice, Canadian bacon and eggs, we boarded the buses in Rockford to go to an elderly peoples home in the suburbs of the city. Here McGovern was to have a short speech and discuss issues with the senior citizens there.

After this short visit with senior citizens we were bused to the airport where we boarded the "Dakota Queen II." At once I could sense a complete different atmosphere on McGovern's plane. In the press plane, things were quite relaxed and informal but on the "Dakota Queen II" it was much more formal. I could feel an air of importance and halfway down the center of the plane was a big curtain behind which was Senator McGovern's suite. I noticed a group of hotel room keys fastened to the ceiling of the airplane and I was told that it was a customary practice that the pressmen take a key from each hotel room where they stayed on the tour and hook it to the ceiling of the plane.

WE WERE ALL immediately given a "cook's tour" of the plane and watched the reporters and pressmen in action. After getting back to my seat to relax, an aide of Senator McGovern came down into our section and asked the producer of our show if I would like to have an informal chat with Senator McGovern. Of course Bob was elated and advised the aide we would be ready in 10 minutes.

We entered the senator's quarters I noticed he was sitting in a breakfast nook awaiting my arrival. After the usual formalities of introduction, we discussed in brief non-political issues and I found it quite easy to be able to converse with the Senator as he made me feel quite at ease.

Everyday on the tour a "pool report" was prepared concerning the various activities that the senator was going to discuss or depending on the time of the pool report, what had already occured. Shown below is a copy of the report of Sept. 8 in part.

> **"McGovern and Richard Johnson chat in McGovern's lounge. Johnson, 43, is the subject on an NPACT study on how a common everyday type reacts to a first hand look at a presidential campaign — the travel, the press, the candidate, etc., etc. Johnson is the credit manager at the National Steel Service Center in Evanston. He lives in Rolling Meadows, Ill., 21 miles Northwest of Chicago.**
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> **They talked about Northwestern University and its football history. McGovern recalled he had tutored football players while a grad student there.**
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> **Johnson said, "I really can't believe this is happening." "I'm so thrilled at everything that's happening to me."**
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> **After the Northwestern and football talk, Johnson asked McGovern if he thinks the campaign is going smooth enough. McGovern gives standard answer. "Not quite as well as I had hoped. It's very tough to put together a national campaign." Said they're up against one of the old pros. Nixon's "been around this game of politics a long time. We're going to make some mistakes."**
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> **They talk about taxes and wage-price freezes. Johnson tells McGovern that's the main issue that bothers working people.**
>
> **McGovern asks Johnson how he thinks McGovern is doing. Johnson says lots of mixed feelings. Say's he's from a Democratic area. On the whole, he said he couldn't predict McGovern's chances. "Nobody knows," he said.**
>
> **Afterwards, Johnson said of McGovern, "He's a very congenial man. I wish he was a little more dynamic. Impressions are based not so much on what people say as how they say it."**

Of course, all during the interview the cameras were grinding and was surprised when someone said that it took about 20 minutes — seemed like only five to me.

After arriving Duluth, Minn. we boarded the buses for the trip across the state line into Superior, Wis. where the senator was to have a short talk with workers and people at a local grainery in Superior. Bob asked me to play reporter for the rest of the afternoon. A mike was hooked under my coat and I visited and talked with people at the granary asking them questions about this visit of McGovern and what chance they think he has in the upcoming election.

At about 2:30 p.m. we flew to Des Moines, Iowa. Lunch was served on the plane and as always, the food was excellent.

Upon the arrival at Des Moines Airport we were again visited by some local prominent people. But this time, instead of having the speech and rally first — we went directly to a farm in Waukee, Iowa and chat with a farmer named Broderick and discuss issues concerning the problems of being a farmer. The gist of the conversation centered around the excessive taxation and the expense of replacing machinery. The senator assured Mr. Broderick that if he were elected he would do everything in his power to help him.

SENATOR McGOVERN has a post-airport rally back at the Des Moines Airport and gave a 45-minute speech. He discusses the "Watergate bugging," the grain sale to Russia, and the possibility of having debates with President Nixon. We had the opportunity to meet the Senator's sister and also some of the political figureheads in the Des Moines area. The reception of McGovern was just like warm and the people were becoming a bit nonchalant about the whole affair towards the end of the speech.

Again we took off and this time we were heading for Albuquerque, N. M. We landed at about 7 p.m. mountain time, and what a beautiful sight it was. Although dusk was just setting, I could hardly wait for the morning to see this beautiful country in the sunshine. It was amusing that only about 100 to 150 persons were at the airport when we arrived — the local paper screamed the headline that a great reception received the senator upon his arrival at the airport yesterday. We were motored to the Hilton Hotel there in Albuquerque where we learned that a great emergency had just arisen. One of Senator McGovern's aides has informed Bob that the scheduled interview with the senator for tomorrow has been canceled. All efforts by Bob failed to change the aide's mind and it seems that the focal point our TV program would be down the drain.

This morning in Rockford, Robin, the news correspondent of our N-Pact team has left for Washington because he had a Friday evening program to moderate. It appears our only hope for this interview tomorrow would be to have Robin come to Alburquerque and see if he could use his influence to persuade Senator McGovern's aide to change his mind. Robin was called to come.

The only business left to do tonight was to have our usual phone call with Mary Ann to relate the events of the day. After the phone call, being quite late, I left word with the hotel to call me at 8 a.m. the next morning and off to bed I went. (Monday: A chat with McGovern.)

Richard Johnson's Odyssey

'Unforgettable Week' With McGovern

In September, Richard Johnson of Rolling Meadows spent a week on the campaign trail with Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern and later documented those experiences. Johnson was selected for the nationwide tour by the National Public Affairs Center for Television as the "Average American." Today the Herald prints the final instalment of memoirs of the trip written by Johnson.

DAY 5

Saturday, Sept. 9, the usual phone call awoke me, and not having to dress up formal today, I went down to the lobby of the hotel where I learned that McGovern was to have a breakfast press conference at 10:30 a.m. and everyone was invited. The main thought on all of our minds in the N-Pact team was — are we going to be able to have our interview this afternoon or not? I took a few pictures, wrote in my diary and about 10:30 a.m. we all went down to breakfast. What a spread this turned out to be.

After breakfast, Sen. McGovern gave a short talk regarding political issues within the Democratic Party. In New Mexico, it seems the party is split down the middle between two various factors. He made every effort possible to bring them together.

After the speech, McGovern went table hopping saying good morning to everyone present. All were advised at this time that the "lid was off," meaning that no more interviews or conferences would be further conducted that day as Sen. McGovern was tired and needed a day of rest.

YOU CAN imagine the thoughts going through our minds when this bomb was dropped. We had nothing to do but wait the arrival of Robin, who was our only hope to see if our interview could still be carried out. McGovern's aid was very persistent, stating that if there were any political questions on Mr. Johnson's mind, he should have asked the senator these points yesterday while he was talking with him on the plane. But in that interview, I had made mention of the fact that we were going to have another interview today and that was the reason I had saved these questions until today's interview.

As soon as Robin arrived, he was briefed of the dilemma. It was amazing how in a matter of five minutes the interview was on after Robin talked with the senator's aide. Once again all our spirits were raised and again I realized that I will have another interview with the possible President of the United States.

The interview was scheduled for 3 p.m., so we had a few hours to ourselves. I went back to my room, which was situated in such a way that we could look down on the hotel's swimming pool. As I looked, I noticed McGovern sitting all by himself in a pair of swimming trunks, putting on suntan lotion like you or I. However, at all the tables surrounding the pool were secret service men watching over the senator. A most unusual scene it was.

I played a little ping pong and just relaxed until just about 2:30 p.m., at which time I put on my finery again and Robin and I began our wait for Sen. McGovern. The interview was to be held in my room and of course, by this time, the lighting and camera crew had completed their work and we all just waited.

AT 3:15 P.M. there was a knock on the door and one of the senator's aides came in and said there was a delay and that the senator would not be present until about 5 p.m. So this just gave me two more hours of butterflies. This went on again later, this seeming delay. It was apparent to Bob that the interview never would be consummated. But at 7:15 p.m. there was another knock at the door and a very big man stepped in, looked around, signaled to the hallway, and into my room stepped Sen. McGovern.

The interview only lasted about five minutes. However, the two main issues that were on my mind were discussed and later used on the TV program. The first issue had to do with what Sen. McGovern could do for me and others like me as a middle-income voter in the area of tax credits and tax relief. The senator stated that his proposal would be to block the loopholes of big corporations and enforce them to pay to the government $22 billion of taxes, of which the senator would give back about $15 billion to the people through local government. The other point I brought up was the impression of the young folk of today concerning the senator's stand on draft dodgers in Canada and his position on amnesty for them.

The senator responded that as long as the War in Vietnam was continued, draft dodgers should assume the consequences of their unlawful acts — but if the war was over, then they should be allowed amnesty.

As the interview was concluded the camera went off, the lights went on and as he was leaving I informally asked the senator if he would sign my memoirs, to which he obliged. And immediately as I handed him my notebook, the camera started rolling again, and after some small talk the senator made the comment: "I understand, Mr. Johnson, that you are leaving us."

I immediately assumed he was thinking about the fact that I was not leaning toward him as a voter and I replied, "No, senator, at this time I am just uncommitted." He smiled and said, "No, I don't mean that — I understand that you are leaving us and returning to Illinois tomorrow."

WELL, I SURE misinterpreted that statement. Seems like I tipped my views, although it evidently gave the senator his biggest laugh of the week, as later on we were told that while going down the elevator, the senator burst out laughing and made the comment, "Here is a man that I gave two interviews to during the week, whereas many reporters got none. He was wined and dined for five days, and now he tells me that he is not sure he is going to vote for me. What does a man have to do to get a vote?" Of course, the senator said all this in a laughing way and I imagine it would give him some thoughts of concern.

After all of us breathed a great sigh of relief now that the interview was over, we went downstairs and were to make a decision as to what we were going to do for the rest of the evening. It was about 8 p.m. and we decided to go and have supper at a quaint Mexican restaurant located outside the city.

We had a lovely dinner and after returning to the hotel we decided that since we had only one more day to go, we would retire early. Actually, it was about quarter to 12 anyhow so it didn't take me long to fall asleep. The next thing I realized the phone was ringing. Looking at my watch, I saw it was only 12:10 a.m. At the other end of the phone was a voice saying that he would appreciate it if he and his friend could have an interview with me as soon as possible. While I wasn't in the best frame of mind, I told him to give me 15 minutes and come up and we can talk. I decided to call Bob and he came over to my room and in a few minutes there was a knock on my door and in stpped two seniors from New Mexico University here in Albuquerque. They were cub reporters for the local newspaper, and after giving them the interview they requested, I thought I'd be able to go right back to sleep, but I was so wound up now all I had on my mind was how early we had to get up in the morning.

We were to leave at 8 a.m. so we had to be up at 6 a.m. Ended up getting only five hours sleep, and I certainly felt it.

DAY 6

Sunday, Sept. 10, was a beautiful day in New Mexico. We were to board a Continental Airlines jet at 8 a.m. By now I actually was getting tired of flying. It's hard to believe because only five days ago I had never been on one of the "big fellows" in my life. After breakfast on the plane I just relaxed until we arrived at O'Hare Airport at 11:18 a.m. — ahead of schedule.

We rented two cars and were on our way to Rolling Meadows. The wrapup of the TV program was now being made as Robin interviewed me while we drove through the streets of Rolling Meadows.

In conclusion, I was asked briefly how I now felt about Sen. McGovern and the possibility of his being elected President in November. I could not help but answer that after five days of being with that man, that some of my thoughts had changed about him. I found him to be a sincerely dedicated man, easy to talk with, quite interested in what you are saying, and possessed of a religious background that I like to see in any person.

IN SUMMING UP the two main problems that the senator has as far as I'm concerned, I feel that, first, he has to make himself well-known to the average voter like myself. Perhaps the way to do this is by hopscotching around the county, visiting people, talking with people, and discussing problems that bother them. This is similar to the situation that Vice President Agnew had in 1968, as a relative unknown. But, of course, he was carried along by President Nixon, whereas Sen. McGovern is the standard-bearer of his party.

The second problem that the senator has, I believe, is that he is so far behind in all the polls that I don't think he has nearly enough of the young vote. It seems to me at this time almost an impossibility to be able to catch up. I do, though, believe that the gap will narrow soon.

The experience that I have had is something that I wish every American had, an opportunity to do — to see what's going on behind the scenes of a political campaign tour. I admit that I have not had much interest in politics up to this time. But now I will keep my eyes and mind open to both sides of all the issues from now until Election Day.

When I arrived at home, I was greeted by my wife and four children. The camera crew was still taking pictures as I finally walked into the house. The N-Pact crew stayed for a bite to eat and we casually hashed over the week's excitement — and again I have to say, as I said in the first line of this article, "This is a week I shall never forget!"